

## SUMMARY

HA-1593

Gordon Witt House

In recording the log house in which Gordon Witt has been living for the last twenty five years or more it became apparent that the site is significant for more than one reason. The house is a true one and a half story log structure with such unusual features as a cut granite fireplace and an 1839 datestone in the foundation. Given the important role of log construction in U. S. architecture (and in early Harford County building) this house stands as a good and relatively early example of its kind.

It may be a symbol as well. The present occupant came here a quarter century ago to escape the urban environment and to enjoy not only seclusion but the hunting of abundant game. Today there are developments on two sides of this property, there are the sounds of automobiles on the now paved roads and there are many more people in the woods still standing. Mr. Witt does not hunt much anymore.

Harford County has been an agrarian community for most of the three centuries that people have been living here but in less than three decades has seen vast urbanization. This 140 year old rural dwelling may one day be the only visual reminder left of what its neighborhood has always been.

## INVENTORY FORM FOR STATE HISTORIC SITES SURVEY

**1 NAME**

HISTORIC

1839 Log House

AND/OR COMMON

Gordon Witt's house

**2 LOCATION**

STREET &amp; NUMBER

Rush Road

CITY, TOWN

VICINITY OF Rocks

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

STATE

COUNTY

**3 CLASSIFICATION**

## CATEGORY

☐ DISTRICT☐ BUILDING(S)☒ STRUCTURE☐ SITE☐ OBJECT

## OWNERSHIP

☐ PUBLIC☒ PRIVATE☐ BOTH

## PUBLIC ACQUISITION

☐ IN PROCESS☐ BEING CONSIDERED

## STATUS

☒ OCCUPIED☐ UNOCCUPIED☐ WORK IN PROGRESS

## ACCESSIBLE

☒ YES: RESTRICTED☐ YES: UNRESTRICTED☐ NO

## PRESENT USE

☐ AGRICULTURE☐ MUSEUM☐ COMMERCIAL☐ PARK☐ EDUCATIONAL☒ PRIVATE RESIDENCE☐ ENTERTAINMENT☐ RELIGIOUS☐ GOVERNMENT☐ SCIENTIFIC☐ INDUSTRIAL☐ TRANSPORTATION☐ MILITARY☐ OTHER**4 OWNER OF PROPERTY**

NAME

Martin L. Knopp et al

Telephone #:

STREET &amp; NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

VICINITY OF

STATE, zip code

**5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**COURTHOUSE,  
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC

Harford County Courthouse

Liber #: 668

Folio #: 481

STREET &amp; NUMBER

40 South Main Street

CITY, TOWN

Bel Air,

STATE  
Maryland 21014**6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE

DATE

☐ FEDERAL ☐ STATE ☐ COUNTY ☐ LOCALDEPOSITORY FOR  
SURVEY RECORDS

CITY, TOWN

STATE

## 7 DESCRIPTION

NA-1593

### CONDITION

☐ EXCELLENT  
☐ GOOD  
☐ FAIR  
☒ DETERIORATED  
☐ RUINS  
☐ UNEXPOSED

### CHECK ONE

☐ UNALTERED  
☒ ALTERED

### CHECK ONE

☒ ORIGINAL SITE  
☐ MOVED DATE \_\_\_\_\_

### DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The house in which Gordon Witt has been living for over twenty-five years is a 1-1/2 story log house on a high stone foundation. The logs are hewn and V-notched. It has a typical gable-end roof with a ridge running north-south.

The building faces east and is three bays wide and an off center central entrance. The windows are 2/2 sash but are replacements. The slope of the site makes steps necessary to the first level of this facade. A collapsed porch of modern materials covered this area.

The north gable end has a centrally located interior chimney. There is a door to the west of the chimney and two four light casements vent the gable.

The west side of the present structure contains a shed roofed single story cement block kitchen addition. On the inside the original west wall is chinked with wood scraps and appears unweathered suggesting that there has always been some kind of west lean-to.

The south gable end has a 6/6 window to the west of center on the main level and the same casements as the north gable. A centrally located bulkhead leads down into the basement.

The basement is an unfinished, unlighted storage area with uncoursed rubble walls. One sees puncheons and a hewn summer-beam as well as a rectangular stone base for the chimney. It is in this base that one sees the information "1839 PPT" carved into one of the stones. Note: Three people, Phillip Lord, Orlando Rideout V and myself all felt as though the third digit, although faint, was a "3". It could possibly be an "8", however, the construction of the house seems much earlier than 1839.

The main level of the original house was a single elongated room downstairs with the aforementioned lean-to on the west side. The two rooms were connected by a centrally located door in the west wall. The log walls and exposed joist ceiling made of hewn timbers are exposed and show no evidence of whitewash or plastering. The chimney and fireplace are at the north end of the room. The fireplace is made of rough stone (granite?) with an unusual dressed stone lintel and surround. A raised horizontal panel is carved into the lintel.

An enclosed string stairs is on the east side of the fireplace occupying the northeast corner of the room. The risers contain cut nails as does the batten door.

The second level is characterized by its knee walls and tray ceiling and the partitioning of one large room and two smaller ones (probably not original).

A hatch in the ceiling gives access to the roof framing. One sees common hewn rafters and fixed at the ridge via mortise tenon and trunnel. There are half dovetailed collars fixed with cut-nails as well as diagonal wind bracing lapped into the upper face of the rafters. One also sees an unexplainable 4"x4" hewn post that rises from the second floor through the ceiling and up under the second truss from the south gable. Iron straps fix it to the first floor ceiling joist.

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

PERIOD		AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)	
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION			

## SPECIFIC DATES

## BUILDER/ARCHITECT

## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

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CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

**9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES**

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

**10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA**

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY \_\_\_\_\_

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE \_\_\_\_\_ COUNTY \_\_\_\_\_

STATE \_\_\_\_\_ COUNTY \_\_\_\_\_

**11 FORM PREPARED BY**

NAME / TITLE

Wayne L. Nield II Historic Sites Surveyor

ORGANIZATION

Harford County Department of Planning and Zoning

DATE

April 1981

STREET & NUMBER

45 South Main Street

TELEPHONE

301-879-2000 ext. 207

CITY OR TOWN

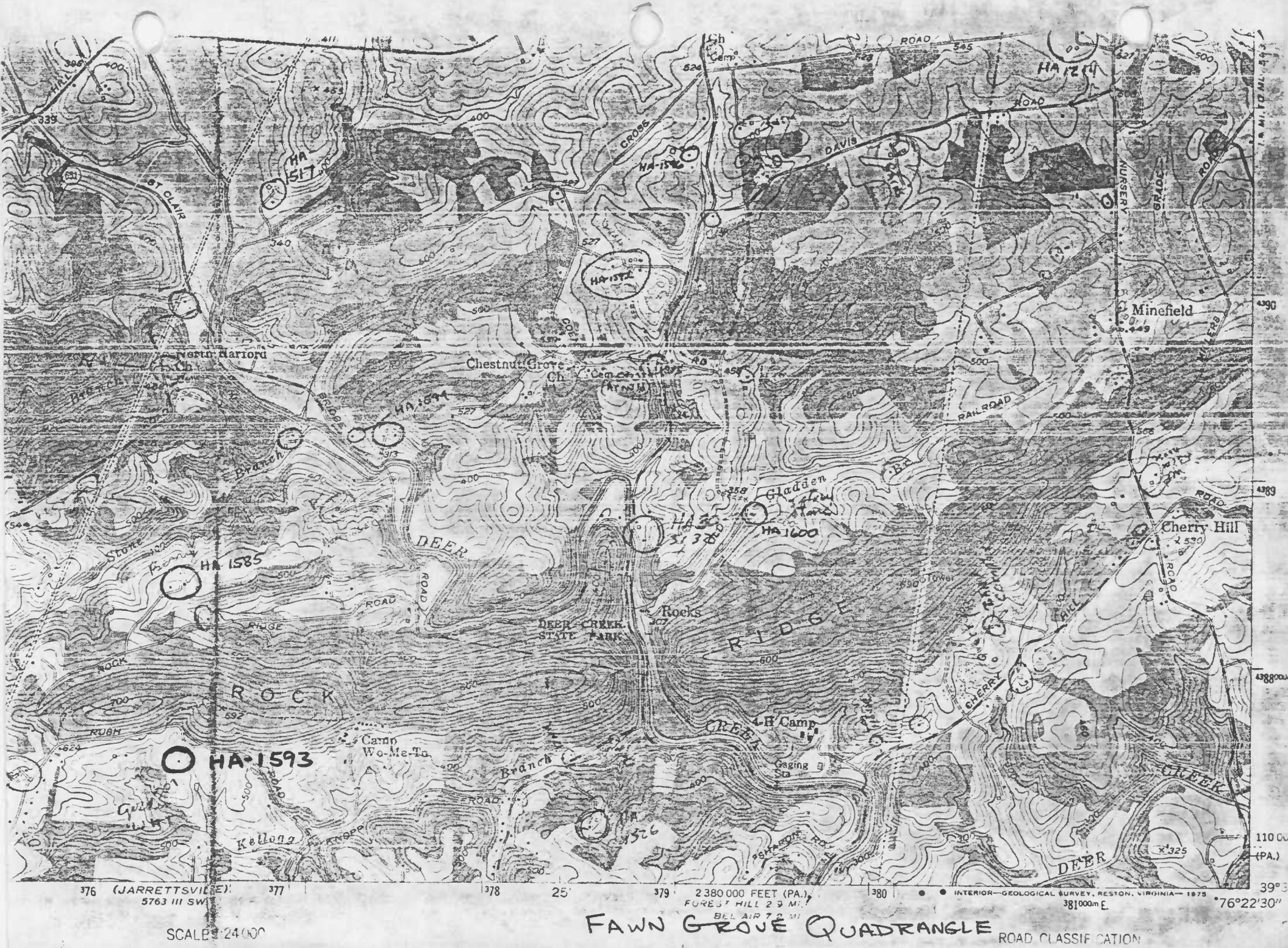
Bel Air

STATE Maryland

The Maryland Historic Sites Inventory was officially created by an Act of the Maryland Legislature, to be found in the Annotated Code of Maryland, Article 41, Section 181 KA, 1974 Supplement.

The Survey and Inventory are being prepared for information and record purposes only and do not constitute any infringement of individual property rights.

RETURN TO: Maryland Historical Trust  
The Shaw House, 21 State Circle  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401  
(301) 267-1438





1839 Log House

HA-1593

Rocks, Md.

Phillip Lord

October 1980

west elevation





1839 Log House

HA-1593

Rocks, Md.

Phillip Lord    October 1980

north elevation



1839 Log House

HA-1593

Rocks, Md.

Phillip Lord    October 1980

south elevation